

Cybersecurity
Month

Modern Workplace
is coming

Mask photo
contest

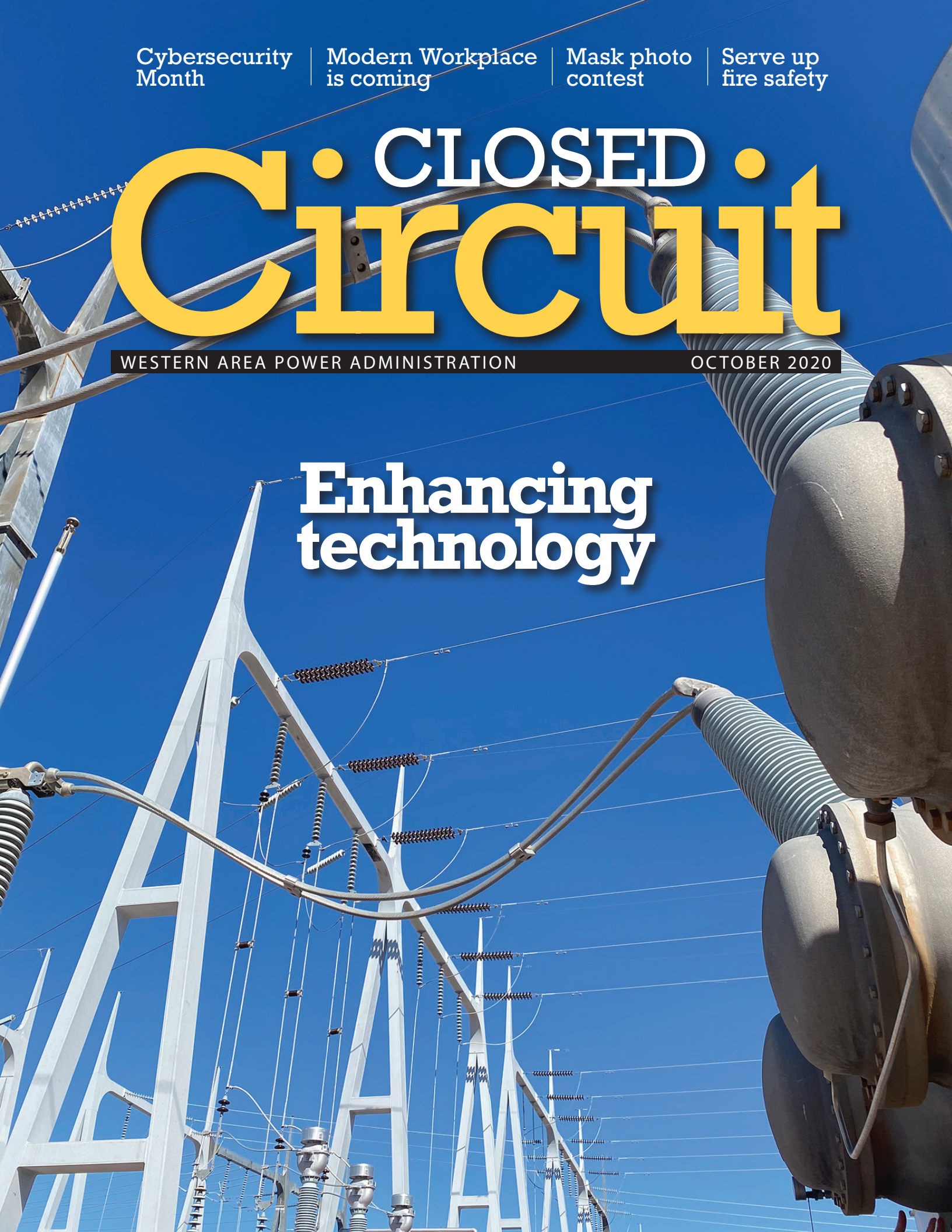
Serve up
fire safety

• CLOSED • Circuit

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

OCTOBER 2020

Enhancing technology





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CLOSED Circuit

VOL. 42 NO. 10, OCTOBER 2020

Editor: PHILIP REED

Graphic Designer: GRANT KUHN

Do you have an idea for a story?
Contact reed@wapa.gov



**Western Area
Power Administration**

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION
P.O. Box 281213
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213
720.962.7050
www.wapa.gov | publicaffairs@wapa.gov

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*A clear day dawns at
Mead Substation near
Boulder City, Nevada.
(Photo by Leah Shapiro)*



Heating up the demand

By Eric Barendsen

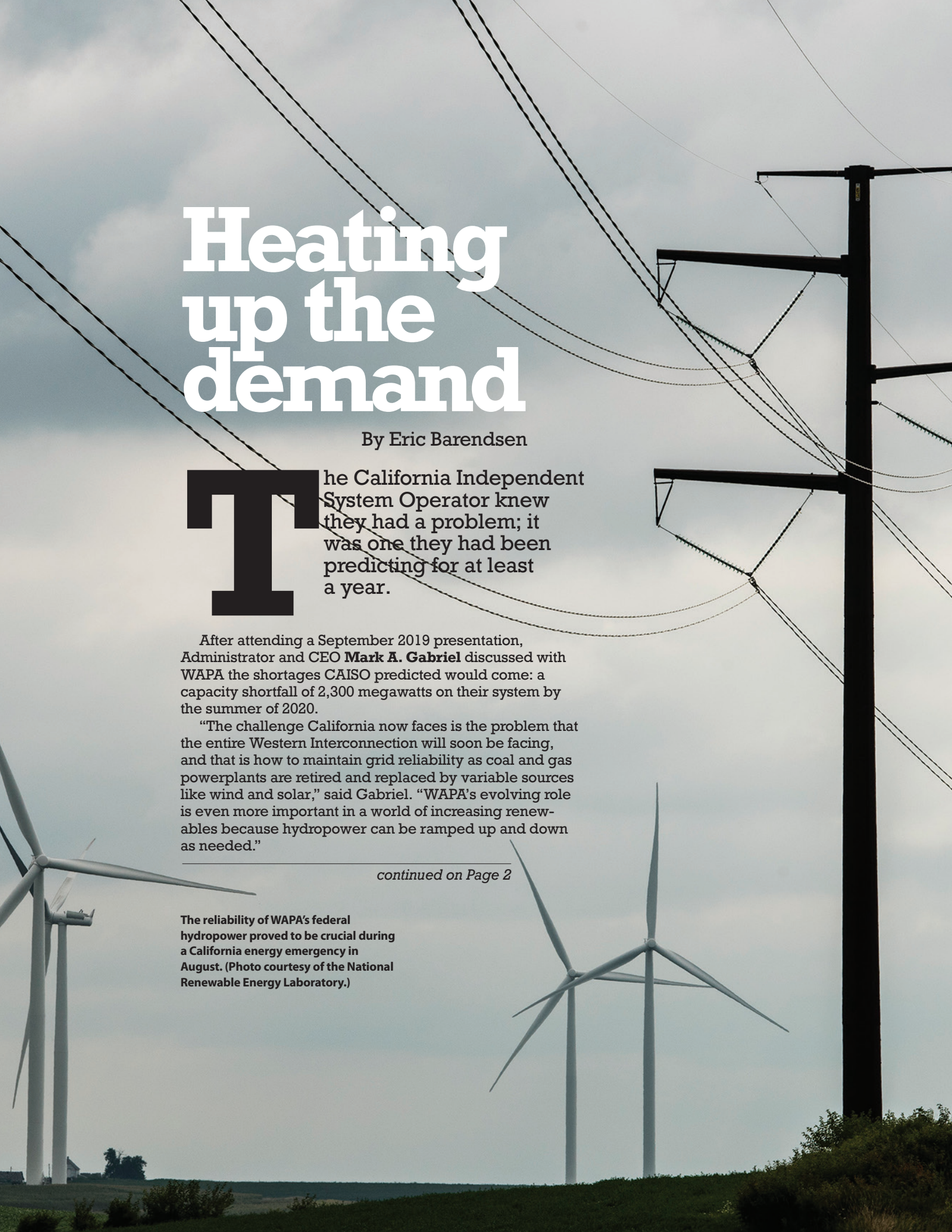
The California Independent System Operator knew they had a problem; it was one they had been predicting for at least a year.

After attending a September 2019 presentation, Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** discussed with WAPA the shortages CAISO predicted would come: a capacity shortfall of 2,300 megawatts on their system by the summer of 2020.

“The challenge California now faces is the problem that the entire Western Interconnection will soon be facing, and that is how to maintain grid reliability as coal and gas powerplants are retired and replaced by variable sources like wind and solar,” said Gabriel. “WAPA’s evolving role is even more important in a world of increasing renewables because hydropower can be ramped up and down as needed.”

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The reliability of WAPA’s federal hydropower proved to be crucial during a California energy emergency in August. (Photo courtesy of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.)



A steep hill to climb

The emerging struggle in meeting California's demand would come from increased early-evening ramping needs—rapidly firing up enough dispatchable generation to keep the grid stable—and the timing of daily peak demand shifting from afternoon to evening in the summer months.

CAISO faces an increasingly steep evening ramp when demand spikes around 6 p.m. as people crank up their air conditioners and dinner-time energy use while California's abundant solar production drops off with the setting sun.

"Historically, California has relied on non-renewable energy sources, such as natural gas and imports from the north, to meet their evening ramping needs," said Senior Vice President and Sierra Nevada Regional Manager **Sonja Anderson**. "But over the past year, California retired 4,000 MW of coal and natural gas generation, replacing it with solar and wind."

Add to that a dry hydrological year and a record-setting heatwave, which at 130 degrees topped the highest temperature previously recorded in Death Valley, and the perfect storm CAISO had described hit the system in the middle of August.

Facing the facts

According to weather forecasters, the mid-August heatwave in the Central Valley would last up to eight days with highs consistently above 100 degrees.

On Aug. 12, CAISO declared restricted maintenance operation for Aug. 14-17, which required generators and transmission operators to postpone planned outages and ensure all grid assets were available for use.

On Aug. 13, CAISO began taking the additional step of issuing statewide "flex alerts," calling on businesses and residents to curb their energy use to reduce demand. The measures included turning off unnecessary lights, using major appliances before 3 p.m. and after 10 p.m., and setting air conditioner thermostats to 78 degrees or higher.

As feared, on Friday, Aug. 14, at approximately 3:30 p.m. Pacific time, CAISO issued an Energy Emergency Alert Level 2, a status not seen there since the energy crisis in 2001. Level 2 means that CAISO has implemented all potentially mitigating measures and cannot meet demand, requiring it to intervene in the market by ordering powerplants online.

"Fortunately, WAPA's real-time merchants and dispatchers were prepared for this scenario," said Supervisory Power System Dispatcher **Marc Desmarais**. "We were ready to help when CAISO indicated that an Energy Emergency Alert Level 3 was imminent."

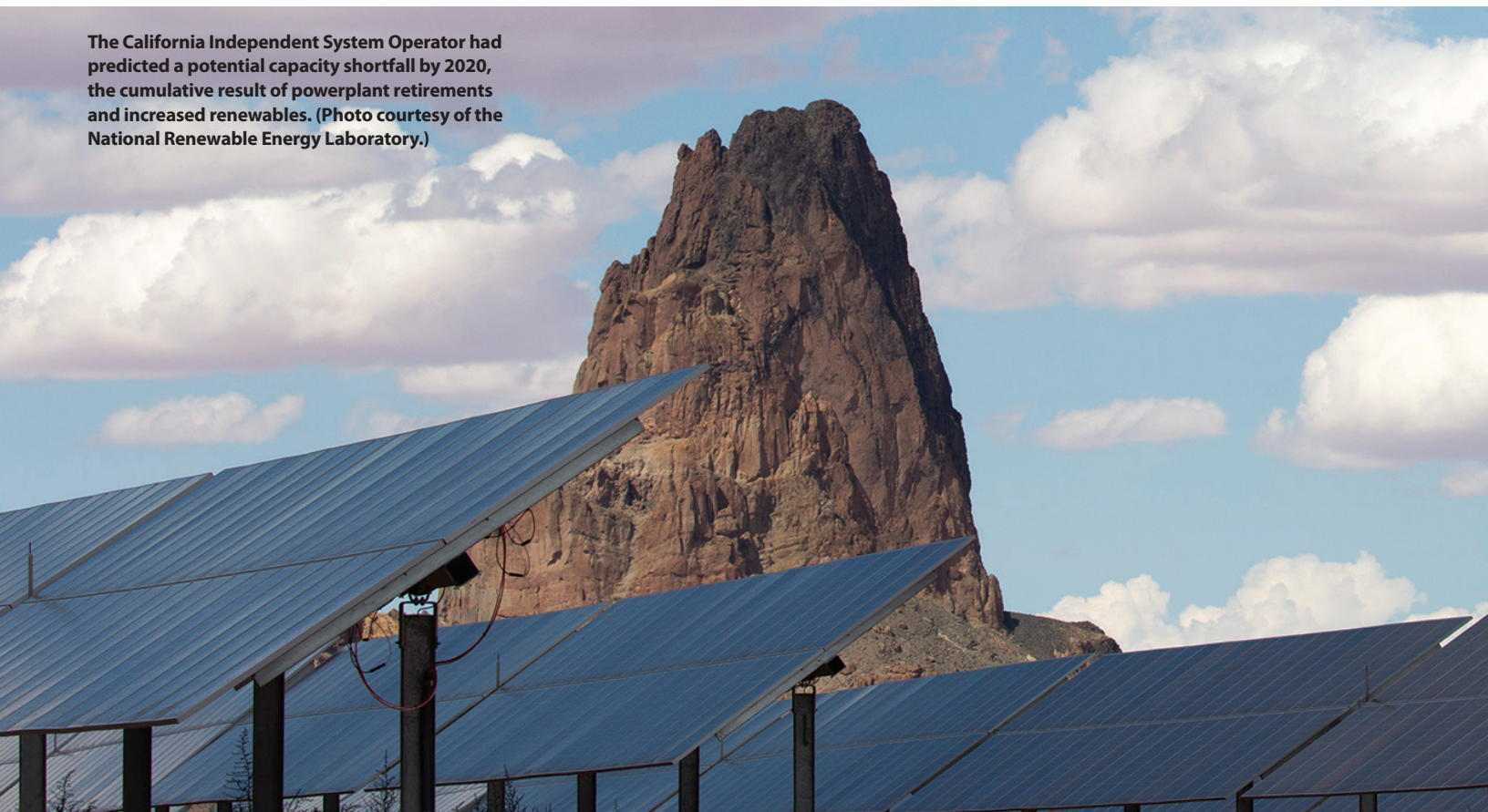
In coordination with the Bureau of Reclamation, WAPA's control centers in the Rocky Mountain and Desert Southwest regions, its real-time merchants in Montrose, Colorado, and CAISO all agreed to a plan of action.

Beginning at about 5:30 p.m., Hoover Dam generation ramped up to support CAISO's call for assistance. Hoover Dam pumped about 260 megawatt-hours onto the Southwest power grid through 9 p.m.

According to energy experts, CAISO's call for assistance came too late to avert what happened next. At 6:36 p.m., CAISO declared an Energy Emergency Level 3 and directed utilities to implement rotating outages to protect grid stability, initially ordering 500 MW of load offline. By 7:03 p.m., CAISO ordered another 500 MW out of service as the blackouts rolled across the state.

Situated farther north on the Colorado River, Glen Canyon Dam

The California Independent System Operator had predicted a potential capacity shortfall by 2020, the cumulative result of powerplant retirements and increased renewables. (Photo courtesy of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.)



ramped up to support California's energy need as well, providing about 500 MWh between 7 p.m. and 1 a.m. Aug. 15-16.

"We have tested this scenario in the past and from an Operations standpoint it was efficiently carried out," said Desmarais. "We credit our great marketers, our outstanding dispatchers and Glen Canyon Operations' adaptability for our successful response," he said.

Fortunately, by 8:54 p.m., it had cooled off enough for CAISO to lift the emergency declaration and power was quickly restored statewide.

Reclamation and WAPA again provided assistance to the extent possible during the emergency declaration the following day.

Delta breeze or bust

Saturday, Aug. 15, CAISO was forced to issue another Level 3 emergency, citing a trio of issues: high demand due to the heatwave, an unplanned 470-MW powerplant outage and lack of nearly 1,000 MW of anticipated wind power.

"For those of you familiar with the Central Valley, one of the greatest treasures we speak of is 'the delta

breeze,'" said Anderson, referring to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta. "No matter how hot it gets in the afternoon, you can always count on sitting outside in the evening with a cool breeze while sipping on your favorite beverage of choice."

The August heatwave was unusual, however, in that the cool breeze off the delta never materialized, and California's legion of wind turbines sat largely idle during the peak hours they were needed most.

Calling for backup

That weekend, California Governor Gavin Newsom's office took creative measures, such as enlisting roughly 300 MW of distributed battery storage and reaching out to the Navy and commercial ports in California to request that they use on-ship electrical generation instead of drawing on the overburdened grid.

On the morning of Sunday, Aug. 16, Anderson and her team hopped on a call with representatives from the governor's office and cabinet who were looking to state and federal water and power agencies to reduce load and make emergency resources available to the California grid.

Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources worked together to curtail pumping in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta, freeing up nearly 1,700 MWh for other uses. To boost available resources, Reclamation and WAPA joined forces Aug. 14-19 to generate and transmit roughly 5,400 MWh in response to California's energy emergency.

Vice President of Power Operations for the Colorado River Storage Project, DSW and RM **Jon Aust** said he was proud to be part of WAPA and this industry during the response, particularly on two fronts.

"First is the speed at which WAPA Power Operations and Power Marketing staff jumped into action when the call for emergency energy was made, and second is that WAPA was one of many who ensured that these emergency situations were mitigated by delivery to those utilities in need," he said. "These two facets were a testament to the community that has been built in the industry and across the Interconnection."

Reclamation generated the power using its fleet of federal hydroelectric dams in the West, including, among others, 18 dams in the Central Valley

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Project in northern California; Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona; Hoover Dam on the border of Arizona and Nevada; Morrow Point Dam in western Colorado; Davis Dam in Arizona; and Parker Dam in California.

The central locations of the Glen Canyon and Hoover dams, especially, made them ideal for supporting much of the Western Interconnection in such a scenario.

WAPA then transmitted the energy via its high-voltage transmission system into CAISO's service territory, while continuing to reliably serve WAPA's customer loads. SN provided more than 3,300 MWh, while CRSP provided nearly 1,900 MWh and DSW provided more than 200 MWh.

"Based on Reclamation's water schedule, we regularly sell into CAISO, so for [SN], it was not much different except to maximize the sales to support CAISO," said Vice President of Power Marketing **Arun Sethi**.

In some cases, WAPA was able to offset this generation and continue to meet its customers' demand by increasing hydropower output from other dams to provide power to local areas.

The aftermath

On Sunday, Aug. 16, Governor Newsom called upon CAISO, the state's generators and consumers to do everything possible to ensure California avoided additional rotating blackouts. He ordered an investigation complete with recommendations on how to fix the problems exposed by the strained system without impacting the state's renewable energy goals.

Continued high temperatures into early September forced CAISO to declare Level 2 emergencies four more times over three weeks, but the state managed to avoid rolling backouts thanks to the conservation efforts of consumers and better management of generation resources.

"As a lifelong California resident, I was proud to work for an agency that was part of the solution and helped California keep the lights on," said Anderson. "Going forward, grid managers will have to adapt quickly to the operational challenges they face in terms of the steep ramps, oversupply risks and decreased frequency response inherent in balancing high levels of renewables."


The value of hydropower

WAPA's response to this emergency underscores the fact that hydroelectric dams remain crucial sources of reserve energy during system emergencies, as they can quickly dispatch a large amount of electricity onto the grid.

WAPA and Reclamation have plans in place with a number of utilities to provide emergency power from federal hydroelectric powerplants when the time comes.

"Hydropower is the ultimate generation source, providing both grid stability and low-cost and renewable energy, which is a combination not present in any other form of electric generation today," Gabriel recently wrote in *Public Utilities Fortnightly*. "Hydropower is key to a low-carbon future while maintaining the same electric reliability our lives and economies depend on." □

Note: Barendsen is a public affairs specialist.



WAPA's timely intervention helped alleviate the capacity shortfall. "We have tested this scenario in the past and from an Operations standpoint it was efficiently carried out," said Supervisory Power System Dispatcher **Marc Desmarais**.

Virtual town hall keeps employees informed

On Aug. 27, WAPA hosted its third COVID-19 virtual town hall event, providing updates on the pandemic to employees across the organization's 15-state footprint and giving them a forum for having their questions answered.

Safety and Occupational Health Manager **Krystall Valencia** hosted the event, which began with remarks from Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel**, who expressed his appreciation for the professionalism, dedication and flexibility of WAPA employees.

"I have said it before and will say it again: The people who work at WAPA are the best in the business," said Gabriel. "We have maintained our high standards of excellence, productivity and service throughout this pandemic, meeting all of our third-quarter performance goals."

He explained that employees would soon be receiving Administrator's Coins of Excellence for their work during the pandemic.

"This performance consistency in the face of adversity demonstrates how resilient and strong WAPA is as an organization, that we can pick up and leave our offices with days' notice, fully expecting to return in a couple of weeks, and instead adapt and flourish in a completely new working environment," he said.

Gabriel then discussed the potential for workplace reentry, speaking about the factors that complicate a single, uniform solution. This includes the fact that different states within WAPA's service territory are facing different pandemic conditions, with many of them struggling to contain COVID-19 and others with only a tenuous hold of the situation.

Other issues include the start of in-person schooling in some areas, the lack of availability of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies, the looming flu season and potential concerns regarding heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in WAPA's facilities.

Gabriel reminded employees that, in spite of these challenges, teams across WAPA are dedicated solely to the cause of safe and responsible reentry.

"What we do not want to do is return to the office only to again return home because local conditions deteriorate or, even worse, due to an outbreak in our buildings," he said. "This will be a measured, gradual reentry focused on good science and, most importantly, protecting your health and safety."

Gabriel also introduced Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer **Michael Peterson** and then turned things over to Acting Chief Strategy Officer **Stacey Decker**, who discussed the results of the recent WAPA-wide wellness survey.

The anonymous survey – the third conducted during the pandemic – revealed that increasing numbers of employees reported that they do not feel ready to return to the workplace. Their reasons included potential exposure to COVID-19, having to wear a mask for extended periods and the fact that many schools are starting classes in remote or hybrid status.

Chief Public Affairs Officer **Teresa Waugh** then spoke about the Integrated Communications Group,

Emergency Management Specialist **Tarra Keathley** discussed COVID-19 gating criteria and Safety and Occupational Health Manager **Matt Monroe** covered facility readiness.

Senior Human Resources Business Partner **Nikki King** then discussed flexible options for teleworking employees and provided safety tips regarding the proper wearing of facemasks. Valencia then announced the winners of the WAPA-wide mask photo contest.

Chief of Staff **Melissa Ardis** closed the meeting by facilitating a live Q&A with employees.

"I want to reiterate how proud I am of all of you and your ability to overcome, adapt and thrive," said Gabriel at the end of his remarks. "Working together, we can respond effectively to the many challenges facing us, successfully deliver on our mission and support our customers, all while also living up to our core value to 'Do what is right. Do what is safe.' The safe and right choice may not always be the easy choice; that is why that core value is needed, to remind us that traveling the safe and principled path is the path to a bright and successful future." □

See the photo contest results on Page 10.



Wearing a mask

Senior Human Resources Business Partner **Nikki King** provided the following tips for properly wearing a mask:

- **Don't** wear the mask below your nose.
- **Don't** leave your chin exposed.
- **Don't** wear your mask loosely with gaps on the sides.
- **Don't** wear your mask so it covers just the tip of your nose.
- **Don't** push your mask under your chin to rest on your neck.
- **Do** wear your mask so it comes all the way up, close to the bridge of your nose and all the way down under your chin.
- **Do** tighten the loops or ties so it's snug around your face, without gaps.



King also provided these tips:

- Always wash your hands before and after wearing a mask.
- Use the ties or loops to put your mask on and pull it off.
- Don't touch the front of the mask when you take it off.
- For those who live in apartments, put the mask on and remove it while inside your home.
- Elevators and stairwells can be high-contamination areas.
- Wash and dry your cloth mask daily and keep it in a clean, dry place.
- Don't have a false sense of security.
- Masks offer limited protection and work better when combined with hand washing and social distancing.

What you should know about Modern Workplace

By Leah Shapiro

The Modern Workplace. You've likely been hearing about it for a while now. Perhaps you're not sure what all the fuss is about.

Per Microsoft, the Modern Workplace allows users to “improve productivity and satisfaction, and create more seamless communication and collaboration across locations and platforms while maintaining the security and integrity of systems and data.”

It may sound like a bunch of buzzwords, but Information Technology Project Manager **Denise Elkin** explained what it actually means for WAPA users.

“Modern Workplace isn't one program or application,” she said. “It's a collection of tools and programs that work together to

enhance your work experience, all while allowing the flexibility of working from different locations or devices.”

Luckily, the project was underway before the COVID-19 pandemic and hasn't been delayed due to the response. Additionally, the timing of the implementation is fortunate.

“WAPA employees across the organization will benefit greatly from all that Modern Workplace allows, especially as the maximum telework posture continues,” said Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer **Mike Montoya**.





Rolling it out

WAPA has been using a phased approach to make the move. Back in January, we migrated email to the cloud. In May, we deployed Skype for Business Online and began Office 365 upgrades.

These changes brought a host of features and benefits, including online archiving, increased security, the ability to schedule meetings on demand, connection from mobile devices and increased meeting functionality such as polling and whiteboarding.

In July we deployed OneDrive online, which is essentially personal storage in the cloud. OneDrive is a great place to house working documents. It allows increased collaboration through file sharing and coauthoring of documents. As another benefit, you can access OneDrive from a mobile device and it will synchronize with your desktop version.

"Imagine you find yourself working somewhere with no internet service," Elkin explained. "You can download a version of your document from the cloud to your device and work on it. Once you're internet connected again, any edits you made will be synced and saved back to the cloud version."

In OneDrive, you can organize your files and create folders just like you can in your shared drives or file explorer. You can also see files and folders that others have shared and

keep track of anything you've shared with others. OneDrive provides one terabyte of cloud storage for files.

"A terabyte is a huge amount of space," said System Administrator **Pattie Musk**, who works under the Innovative Management Concepts contract. "Our users with known large storage needs aren't even coming close to using a quarter of it."

It is important to note that OneDrive will ultimately replace your P: drive or "user drive." As the time gets closer, you will receive instructions about how to move your files from the P: drive to your OneDrive.

In September, we began preparing for the migration to SharePoint Online. Most of this effort is on the back end of the system and users are not expected to experience a huge difference.

"It will have familiar navigation, but a new and exciting look and feel," said Information Technology Specialist **Terri Hill**.

Content owners and editors will likely notice some differences, and training will be available to learn some of the new capabilities.

The SharePoint you're used to using had a hierarchical structure in which sites lived under one another. SharePoint online is "flattened out" and doesn't allow for multiple layers.

"The new structure is a hub, where everything branches out from one central place," Hill explained.

"It's more of a ranch-style home, rather than a 10-story building," added Elkin.

Public Affairs and Records Management are already using test sites in SharePoint Online. All existing SharePoint sites will go through an assessment to see what data can be migrated automatically and what will need to be moved manually.

"The migration of data to SharePoint Online will be a long process," Elkin said. "We will contact site owners to plan their migrations."

It is important to understand that existing SharePoint workflows cannot be migrated and will need to be rebuilt.

What's next?

By the end of October, most users will be enrolled in Intune, WAPA's new mobile device management system which provides security controls, patching and upgrades, and controls what apps can be downloaded to the device.

Intune will allow users access to Microsoft files from mobile devices. It also allows separation of personal and work accounts.

All mobile devices will require registration in Intune. Once registered, instead of using the native, built-in apps on your phone for Contacts, Mail

continued on Page 8

and Calendar, you will use the Outlook mobile app to access all three.

Finally, we will deploy Microsoft Teams, which is expected to happen before the end of the year.

Teams is the focal point and hub of all the Modern Workplace products.

"We've been working toward this all year," said Elkin. "Deploying Teams will be the piece that ties everything else together and changes—improves, really—the user experience."

"Teams isn't a new singular program or application," said Vice President of IT for Infrastructure **Greg Hansen**. "It is a platform that will allow people to work together in new and convenient ways."

As we get closer to the launch of Teams, we'll share more specific

information about its core components and make training available to users.

"Teams will fundamentally change the way we work," said Enterprise Architect **David Tucker**. "It won't happen overnight, but as people begin to embrace it, it could move us away from being so dependent on email."

Once Teams has been rolled out, Skype for Business will no longer be used. Skype for Business was only intended as an intermediate step; we couldn't go from Lync directly to Teams.

"Don't worry," said Elkin. "You're not losing any capabilities or convenience. Teams provides all of the same capabilities and more."

"Moving to the Modern Workplace has been a significant effort by the IT

teams making it happen, and it will be a huge shift for our employees," Montoya concluded. "The time is right, though, and current circumstances demand the flexibility and increased collaboration it's going to offer." □

Note: Shapiro is a management and program analyst.

To learn more about the Modern Workplace, any of the Office 365 products or OneDrive, visit the "Modern Workplace" classroom at **myWAPA, Programs, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Paths with Classrooms**



What is Microsoft Teams anyway?

Microsoft Teams offers the WAPA workforce a persistent, chat-based collaboration platform complete with document sharing, online meetings and many more useful features that support business communications. Members of Teams can communicate and engage with each other in a variety of ways.

- **Chat** in Teams provides members the opportunity to engage each other in focused, persistent conversations. It also makes it easy for members to attach documents within the conversations. From the Chat page, members can share their screen or call the other members in the Chat. They can even start an instant video call so that all the other members get an invitation to join.
- **Collaborate** with your coworkers by streamlining communication and improve teamwork. You can search for content, files and people and track project chats, notes, files and meetings in one place. Office apps are built into Teams for easy access to Word, Excel, SharePoint, OneNote and more. Coauthor in real time using connected Office apps.
- **Meetings** are supported for both public and private channels and provide high-definition audio, video and web conferencing. Make meetings more productive with real-time presentation and application sharing and use intelligent features like background blur and scheduling assistance. Cloud recording of meetings is available with transcription and translation.
- **Calling** allows you to connect with anyone through the phone system.

Source: Microsoft Corporation

FID Renovation streamlines data management

By Kevon Storie

For data to be a strategic asset—a target area of WAPA’s Tactical Action Plan—it needs to be stored and managed in a way that maximizes consistency, accuracy and availability for different applications. This is especially true of a record-keeping system as widely used as the Facility Identification, or FID, code. In 2019, a multidisciplinary team was formed for the FID Code Renovation, tasked with establishing WAPA-wide processes and tools for ensuring that the management of FIDs meets the highest standard.

Code used everywhere

It takes a lot of equipment and structures to deliver reliable, affordable power across a vast territory and a robust system to keep track of those assets. From WAPA’s beginning, FID codes have provided business units with a way to identify and locate assets for numerous purposes.

“Finance, Lands and Drawings adopted the Bureau of Reclamation coding system for large ticket items,” explained Project Manager **Rudy Apodaca**. “All other current FID uses are add-ons from the original.”

FIDs are now referenced in engineering drawings and maps; used to locate key assets such as transmission lines, breakers and transformers; and used by Finance to collect cost and depreciation information on fixed assets.

The coding system is also commonly used across the utility industry, so having a more strategic approach to FID management is essential for avoiding duplication when coordinating operations with neighboring utilities.

Because each department manages its own FID list, anomalies and errors crept into the system through inconsistencies in the way codes were formatted or entered between enterprise applications.

For example, multiple transmission structures shared an identical FID, while others had no code assigned at all. These inconsistencies have created more work in reporting and led to inaccuracies in critical safety calculations.

Laying groundwork

The FID Renovation seeks to address these issues by creating a process for maintaining and sharing data that integrates the needs and applications of users throughout WAPA.

The updated format will be replicable, transferrable, scalable, accurate and consistent and allow for timely data input and output and reporting access among all applications that use FIDs. The final tool must not degrade or disrupt historical detail and will allow business units to keep their own staff and processes. The project team completed the initial phase of analyzing alternatives earlier this year.

The first task in phase one was to establish a formal definition of FID.

“The original data requirements and naming conventions haven’t always fit with the attributes we’ve added over 40-plus years,” Apodaca said. “Also, different record-keeping systems

had their own unique codes for some assets.”

The FID code is now defined as a designator for a geographical location or area tied to a WAPA interest: financial, operational, maintenance or data collections. It applies exclusively to power system facilities and is the system of record for those facilities.

It was also necessary to identify one WAPA business unit to take ownership of FID management, once the processes and tools have been set up.

“Many of the problems with FID arose from the scattered approach to managing it,” Apodaca explained. “Putting the system under one business unit will protect the integrity of the process and, along with it, the data.”

Solution identified

The FID Renovation team completed its alternative analysis in June and submitted a plan to bring the FID system into the 21st century.

Their proposed solution draws on WAPA IT expertise to develop a streamlined, consistent management process that will deliver new functionality incrementally.

“It’s easier for the business to handle process and technology changes in incremental steps,” noted Apodaca. “The incremental approach will realize value quickly while maintaining the flexibility to continue improvement over time.”

Leveraging internal resources will also enable WAPA to further automate the FID system and incorporate artificial intelligence and other technologies at less risk and cost.

As the team moves forward to the detailed design and planning phase, the project will focus on technical details and technical resources. The second phase will define platform, data and network; designate the business unit in the operation and maintenance role; and establish the precise workflows and quality checks. □

Note: Storie is a technical writer who works under the Wyandotte Services contract.

Other deliverables in the first phase of FID Renovation include:

- Creating a WAPA-wide process to manage the FID system.
- Formally establishing a system of record for FIDs.
- Designing the system to manage FIDs and assigning resources to support the process.
- Developing a framework for other systems to integrate with the FID system of record.



Employees show off masks for photo contest

This year, Public Affairs' annual photo contest had a special theme: facemasks.

The proper wearing of facemasks has proven to be one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of COVID-19. WAPA has required the wearing of facemasks in all WAPA

facilities and on any WAPA business when proper social distancing cannot be maintained.

The photography contest this year centered on those facemasks in action. WAPA employees across the organization's 15-state footprint submitted photos of themselves and their colleagues wearing masks, both on the job and off.

The top 10 submissions are below. Congratulations to all of the winners, and a very special thanks to everybody who sent in their photos.



First place:
Supervisory Power System Dispatcher
Pete Miller



Second place:
Construction Control
Representative Carol Hansen



Third place:
Power System Dispatcher
Matthew Challstrom



Fourth place:
Division Maintenance
Manager Kurtis Mayer



Fifth place:
Human Resources Specialist
Allison Burnett



Sixth place:
High Voltage Electrician
Julie Coutts



Seventh place:
Financial Program Analyst
Brittanie Paquette



Eighth place:
Administrative Support
Deborah Marcotte



Ninth place:
Supply Technician Sandra
Ocanas



10th place:
Human Resources Specialist
Sandra Coate

Another invisible enemy lurks

By Debra Boothe

People have referred to COVID-19 as an invisible enemy. This month, WAPA's Cyber Security team would like to shine a light on another invisible enemy: cybersecurity threats.

Though it might not seem like it at first glance, COVID-19 and cybersecurity threats have some common traits. They are both mitigated by education, awareness, taking action and demonstrating personal responsibility. One is mitigated by wearing a mask and washing hands; the other is mitigated by practicing good cyber hygiene. In both instances, individuals—as well as their choices and their practices—are the key to safety and security.

In short, without you and your due diligence, WAPA's cybersecurity landscape would be much weaker.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month. This year, Cyber Security is focusing on issues around the maximum telework posture, how it has changed our cybersecurity response and what can be done to make teleworking safer.

The rapid shift to remote work during COVID-19 has changed WAPA's security perimeter and brought new kinds of cybersecurity threats, making it more difficult to protect valuable data and assets both inside and outside of the office. This security perimeter, which used to be WAPA firewalls, has now moved to each user's home and their own internet security provider.

A lot has changed over the past six months. WAPA's Cyber Security team is working diligently behind the scenes to protect the organization's assets and information, such as leveraging cloud security capabilities available to WAPA as part of the Modern Workplace project.

We are learning to operate under the “new normal.” And, recognizing that human behavior is the most likely compromise, there are some measures employees should be taking, too.

We kicked off Cybersecurity Awareness Month with an email from Vice President of Information Technology - Cyber Security **Jim Ball**. Every week this month, we will post brief stories to the Employee Newsroom on the *myWAPA* homepage to share information and tips for employees.

WAPA's workforce is relying on technology more than ever before. This offers convenience and flexibility, but it does not come without risk.

With your help and awareness, we will continue to make our “new normal” more secure. □

Note: Boothe is an information technology specialist who works under the Innovative Management Concepts contract.



Visit the Employee News section of myWAPA each week in October for articles on important cybersecurity subjects, including:

- How to ensure security settings on your home network are giving you the highest level of protection.
- IT solutions that assist you with telework, safely and securely.
- The latest COVID-19-related scams that target the mobile workforce.



Reimagining the Innovation Challenge

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By Jon Sirney

At the second Inclusion, Innovation and Technology Summit in May 2017, the I2T Committee debuted an interactive component of the event: The Innovation Challenge.

The idea was an interesting one: Participants would be presented with real-life issues that WAPA was facing, and then they would break into teams and work together to develop actual, workable solutions to those problems. The entire process would take place over the course of the next few hours, after which each team would present its solution to the rest of the attendees and a panel of judges.

The first Innovation Challenge was a success, but there was also one notable drawback: Participation in the Innovation Challenge was limited to those who were on site at the event. This meant that even though the entire I2T Summit was streamed to employees throughout WAPA, only those at the Sierra Nevada regional office in Folsom, California, where the event was held that year, were able to work on and share solutions.

Because the first I in I2T stands for Inclusion, we knew it would be wise to handle future events a bit differently.

Starting in 2018, we opened the Innovation Challenge to all WAPA employees, allowing them to work on solutions to the issues being discussed on their own, wherever they were located, and then present them to the rest of the attendees and judges via video-conference. This was one way we innovated through technology to drive inclusion, so we managed to hit all three points at once!

Now, as we are finding all of our routines redefined by the COVID-19 pandemic, the time has come to redefine the Innovation Challenge once again.

As you read last month, the I2T Summit is going 100% virtual for 2020. We saw this as an opportunity to respond

constructively to feedback from the previous years' events and challenge the scope of our supposed limitations.

The major change we're making is to the activity's structure.

In prior years, participants would have a very limited time in which to learn about the problem, consider it, brainstorm ideas, settle on one idea, develop that idea and present it. One piece of feedback we received is that it might be helpful to know the problems in advance, so that folks could take time to understand them before diving into solutions.

This year, we will allow exactly that. The I2T Summit will be held Nov. 18-19. On Nov. 16, Innovation Challenge participants will receive a breakdown of the problems to be solved. This will give everybody a chance to get their thoughts straight ahead of time.

Additionally, with the event taking place over the course of two days, the Innovation Challenge will be broken into two parts. On the first day, participants will break into teams to discuss and develop their solutions in virtual VTC conference rooms. On the second day of the Summit, they will present their solutions to the judges. Giving the teams more time to work on the ideas and information in advance will allow them to explore their ideas more thoroughly and also have time to add finishing touches to their presentations for the following morning.

Throughout the event, support will be available to the participants. In previous years we implemented a well-received hotline, which allowed team members to ask questions and request technical help as needed. We will do the same thing



Takes Everyone in a Changing World

this year, ensuring that nobody feels stranded, even if nobody is actually "on site."

All of this means participants should end up seeing this year's Innovation Challenge as both familiar and improved.

Of course, there is one last thing we need for a successful Innovation Challenge: real-world issues facing WAPA for you to solve.

It's fair to say that this year has not gone according to anybody's expectations. COVID-19 has upended our plans many times over. WAPA has overall adjusted to this new normal quite well but that does not mean there isn't room for improvement.

What issues are you facing in your daily work? What processes can be improved? What problems do you feel remain to be adequately addressed?

We won't be able to develop solutions to every problem at the Innovation Challenge this year, but we will review every submission before choosing which ones to focus on.

Please, submit your suggestions. Your colleagues across WAPA just may come together to help develop a solution for it at this year's I2T Summit in November. □

Note: Sirney is a Power System Dispatcher Trainer and the coordinator of the Innovation Challenge.

See
"I2T
Goes
Virtual" in the
September issue
of *Closed Circuit*.



Submit your suggestions for real-world issues facing WAPA to surveymonkey.com/r/2020ProblemSolicitationSurvey



Sign up to participate in the Innovation Challenge at signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4eaca72eabf8c16-innovation



Serve up fire safety in the kitchen

By Paul Robbins

Every year during October, the National Fire Protection Association promotes a specific safety campaign during Fire Prevention Week. The NFPA has dedicated this year's Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 4-10, to its new campaign: "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!"

Cooking is something we do every day and sometimes take for granted. Did you know that cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home-fire injuries in the United States? It's true; 44% of these incidents start in the kitchen and 66% involve the ignition of food or other cooking materials.

"We know cooking fires can be prevented," said NFPA Vice President of Outreach and Advocacy Lorraine Carli. "Staying in the kitchen, using a timer and avoiding distractions such as electronics or TV are steps everyone can take."

Eliminate distractions

Distraction is a regular safety threat and cause of injury in most settings, and the kitchen is no different.

The distractions of social media, electronic games, television, phone calls, texts, emails or even family matters can lead to injury and fire when cooking is involved.

Keep your mind on your task in the kitchen; avoid distraction and concentrate on cooking.

Stay with your food

Don't leave cooking food unattended and never leave the house while cooking. If you must leave, even for a short time, turn off the stove.

Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling or broiling.

If you are simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food, check it regularly. Use a timer as a reminder of when food is ready.

Try a sandwich instead

Cooking does not mix with drowsiness, alcohol or other drugs, including prescription medication.

Stay alert when cooking and stay away from the stovetop or oven if you are sleepy or have been drinking alcohol or taking medication.

Be ready and prepared

Always keep an oven mitt and pan lid nearby when you're cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan to smother the flame, then turn off the burner and leave the pan covered until it is completely cool.

Keep wooden utensils, towels, oven mitts, packaging and other ignitable materials away from the stovetop.

It is also wise to establish a "kid-free zone" of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried. If you have pets, make it pet-free too.

When cooking, always remember to keep safety on the menu and serve up fire safety in the kitchen! □

Note: Robbins is a technical writer who works under the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract.



Practice wildfire safety in the field

This has been one of the worst years for wildfires in the West. Fire season has grown longer, stretching well into autumn and, as of press time, some fires are still burning. Last month, the Safety office released an alert about wildfires. A few of its important points are summarized below.

Hazards: Various hazards exist including burn-overs, entrapment and smoke inhalation that can all lead to a wide variety of injuries.

Communication: Whether it be one-on-one or systemwide, communication is key at all levels. This includes developing a communication plan with a "Quick Reaction Contact List" and a spreadsheet that records the location of WAPA personnel and equipment.

Job Hazard Analysis: Use this proactive approach to identify possible jobsite hazards and strategies aimed at mitigating risks.

Daily briefings: These are natural extensions of the communication plan and JHA process. Conduct daily briefings that include a report of personnel status, safety updates and a situational overview.

Situational awareness: This is key to safety and saving lives. Avoid distractions and shortcuts, stay focused and remain aware of your surroundings, including wind direction, smoke patterns and fire movement.

A few other things: Remember to wear proper personal protective equipment, stay hydrated and watch out for others.

Stop Work Authority: Employees have the green light stop work for safety no matter what, without retaliation. If you are ever unsure, stop work and assess the situation.

Go home safe: The most important thing is that you return home safe at the end of the day.

Read the full alert at [myWAPA, Departments, Safety and Occupational Health, Announcements, Safety Alert: WAPA Wildfire Safety](#)

Gabriel guests on Grid Talk podcast

Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** appeared on Season 1, Episode 22 of the Grid Talk podcast to discuss market dynamics and transmission challenges with host Marty Rosenberg. The episode was released Sept. 11.

Rosenberg is an award-winning energy journalist who has covered business, energy, finance and technology for nearly four decades. He was the editor in chief of EnergyBiz for 10 years and has been published in the *New York Times* and *USA Today*.

Grid Talk bills itself as featuring conversations with “the leaders and innovators shaping the 21st century grid.”

The podcast is part of Department of Energy’s Voices of Experience, an initiative that supports grid modernization by sharing insights, lessons learned and advice on operating in a rapidly evolving industry.

Listen to the episode “Transmission Challenges in a Carbon-Free World” at smartgrid.gov/gridtalk



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Grid Talk

Transmission Challenges in a Carbon-Free



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RM PMOC gets HVAC upgrade, new neighbor

Photo by Darin Barrett

In mid-August, the Rocky Mountain Power Marketing and Operations Center in Loveland, Colorado, got an upgrade to its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system. Crews took advantage of the emptier-than-usual building and parking area to install several new rooftop condensers with minimal disruption.

The project upgraded the cooling for the main computer server room and communications room. It had been planned for nearly a year, before COVID-19 kept a large number of employees out of the office.

"Some of this activity was scheduled to be done on the weekends, or during night hours, but with a high percentage of personnel teleworking, it eliminated that problem," said Facility Maintenance Employee **Darin Barrett**, who works under the RiverTech contract. "This also allowed construction workers to practice social distancing when in the building."

To further allow for safe practices, only a small number of workers were allowed indoors; the rest used a special, designated ladder to gain access to the roof.

"When we do have people return to the PMOC, most will probably never see or hear any of the system in operation," said Barrett, "but I would like them to know that this will allow increased computer server capacity for our supervisory control and data acquisition department, and increased confidence that WAPA can keep the lights on for 40 million Americans 24/7/365, rain, snow or bright 90-degree sunshine."

Barrett was also happy to learn that the building would be getting a new neighbor.

"Congress recently approved the construction of a new clinic for the Department of Veterans Affairs directly north of us," he said. "This is a welcome sight for many of our veterans, including Loveland personnel who have previously served their county in the armed forces."

The clinic is scheduled to open in 2022.



Brief Transmissions

WAPA announces new Safety manager

On Aug. 30, **Jamie Withers** assumed the role of WAPA's Safety and Occupational Health manager.

Withers served as Safety and Occupational Health manager for Upper Great Plains for more than seven years. Prior to his time at WAPA, he served in the U.S. Air Force and spent five years with the Bureau of Reclamation as a Safety and Occupational Health specialist. Withers holds a Bachelor of Science in Safety Technology.

"Jamie and the Safety and Occupational Health Committee will be key players in working with the rest of the organization to integrate more human performance program elements in how we accomplish our mission, while continuing to ensure our number one priority is safety," said Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Kevin Howard** in his announcement. "Please join me in welcoming Jamie to his new role."



WAPA selects VP of Procurement

On Aug. 30, **Jerad Gaines** assumed the role of WAPA's vice president of Procurement. He had been acting in the role since the beginning of the year.

Gaines joined WAPA in 2011 and has served in a variety of roles, including contract specialist, procurement analyst and Procurement manager. He has overseen the execution of \$45 million in procurement actions, including multiple WAPA-wide buys. He also served as the logistics chief for WAPA's Emergency Operations Center during the COVID-19 pandemic response. Gaines has a Master of Science in Project Management and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

"In modeling WAPA's leadership competency 'Student of the Business,' Jerad has served in several details throughout WAPA," said Chief of Staff **Melissa Ardis** in her announcement. "Join me in congratulating Jerad."



Changes to mobile device program

WAPA is replacing its mobile device management program, MaaS360, and moving to Intune. With the move comes a few changes:

- All WAPA-issued mobile devices will need to be registered in Intune. The goal is for all existing mobile devices to be enrolled in Intune by the end of the calendar year.
- After registering in Intune, instead of using the native, or built-in, applications on their phones for email, calendar and contacts, users will use the Outlook mobile app for all three. The app is linked to the desktop Outlook and has a familiar look and feel to it.

Also, iPhones are now the only phone offered to new mobile users. Employees with a WAPA-issued Android device will be moved to an iPhone when it's time to replace the device. Employees who use a personal device for work purposes can continue to use whatever device they choose.

Employees can now use the Information Technology Service Portal to request or upgrade mobile devices or terminate their service.

For more information, visit [myWAPA, More News](#) and scroll to the Sept. 5 "Changes to mobile device program" story.



Federal Benefits Open Season begins Nov. 9

The Federal Employees Health Benefits Open Season runs from Nov. 9 - Dec. 14. During this period, federal employees have the opportunity to enroll, change plans or plan options, change enrollment type or cancel enrollment for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program.

Federal employees also have the opportunity to re-enroll or newly enroll in the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program.

The 2020 Open Season information, including premiums and plan brochures, will be posted at [opm.gov/openseason](#) by early November.

If you have questions about Federal Benefits Open Season or your benefits, contact **Timothy Lammon** at lammon@wapa.gov or **Krystle Neal** at klneal@wapa.gov

